



Kay Ivey  
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of  
**REHABILITATION SERVICES**



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COMMISSIONER

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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Lanzi will serve as keynote speaker for this year's YLF mentor luncheon*

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) will offer more than 30 students with disabilities an opportunity to visit the state Capitol and meet Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey Wednesday, June 5.

The event, which is sponsored by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Troy University, will include the Angeline Pinckard Mentor Luncheon at the RSA Activity Center starting at 11:30 a.m., where delegates will interact with and receive advice from successful adults with disabilities.

The guest speaker for this year's luncheon is Mark Stephen Lanzi, who earned the Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities 2018 Youth Leadership Award.

As a high school student, Lanzi was diagnosed with Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy (LHON). LHON is a mitochondrial genetic condition, inherited from the mother, that can cause the optic nerve to atrophy, but does not always do so. It does not affect either the eye or the brain, but rather the optic nerve.

Lanzi, a student at Auburn University, has been engaged and involved in campus life since arriving on campus. As a freshman, he served in a leadership role in the Honors Congress. After serving as team leader and faculty relations chair, he was selected as Honors Congress president, an elected position typically reserved for rising seniors.

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SERVING ALABAMA'S CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Lanzi

May 31, 2019

Page 2

As a reporter for *The Plainsman*, the university newspaper, Lanzi writes a weekly current affairs column that reflects diverse opinions and has sparked campus-wide discussions on a number of topics.

Other events include meetings with community leaders at 9 a.m. and a technology expo at 1:15 p.m. in the RSA Activity Center.

YLF delegates are chosen through a statewide competition that seeks students with disabilities who have leadership potential. The group reflects the state's demographic makeup in terms of geography, gender, ethnicity, and types of disabilities.

To be eligible to participate in the forum, students must have a disability, be a junior or senior in high school, and be between 17 and 21 years of age.

*The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.*

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